

Statement of Rep. Tom Davis
April 16, 2007
Remarks before the Participants in
DC Voting Rights March

I want to thank you all for coming up here today.

And I want to thank Mayor Fenty, Congresswoman Norton and the people from D.C Vote for all their hard work on this issue.

I also want to point out all the hard work done by the D.C. Republican Party on this issue. This is a bipartisan effort and we would not be where we are today without their help.

For four years now, I have been trying to make the case that you all deserve a fully vested Member of the House of Representatives.

This has been a long and often frustrating process – but it is an honor to work hard at doing good things.

As I look out on this crowd today, I’m reminded that the United States House of Representatives was organized to represent you – the American people.

We call it the People’s House but it has never been allowed to fulfill its central purpose – representing all of the “People of the Several States.”

I want to emphasize to you today that you are included in that phrase. The men and women who drafted our Constitution intended this House to represent all Americans.

Whether we win this battle today or tomorrow or next year that fact will not change, and I’m going to keep pointing out the logical inconsistencies in our opponent’s point of view until that view crumbles under its own weight.

And with your help, we will eventually win.

I also want to encourage you to focus on the most important issue in this debate.

And it’s not the issue of constitutionality – it’s the issue of morality.

How can we send Americans to die for democracy around the world and deny democracy to Americans here in our own capital?

For a little while this government said to some Americans, “You don’t have the right to vote because of your gender. But only for a little while...

For a little longer this government said to some Americans, “You don’t have the right to vote because of your race. But only for a little while...

And this government still says to some Americans, “You don’t have the right to vote because of where you live.”

But only for a little while...

We will win this debate. You will win this debate.

Because you are Americans, and you are right. And because you must prevail for liberty to prosper.

George Washington and the Framers who wrote the Constitution intended you to have a voting member in Congress, and so do I.

On this hallowed ground the spirits of those who wrote our Constitution are calling out to us, and they are saying with one voice: PASS THIS BILL.

Now I know you have worked hard for your cause and you have marched today, but there is more that needs to be done.

I want every one of you to go home tonight and think of ten friends you can call who live out in the rest of the country.

And I want you to call those friends and ask them to organize their friends to tell my fellow members of Congress that they demand that you have the rights every other American has.

And if they say they don’t know how to do that you send them to the D.C. Vote website. Everything they need is there for the taking.

Your friends must speak for you because that is who this body listens to.

So don't stop here at the Capitol steps, trust the system and take your story to America.

They will listen, you will win.

And the whole country will be better for it.

Thank you all, again, for encouraging me in this fight.